DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 978 SO 021 817

AUTHOR Cangemi, JoAnn; Aucoin, Linda
TITLE Attitudes of Social Studies Teachers toward the Teaching of Values.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 20p.
AVAILABLE FROM JoAnn Cangemi, Nicholls State University, P.O. Box 2050, Thibodaux, LA 70310.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Objectives; *Educational Research; Grade 4; Grade 5; Grade 6; Intermediate Grades; *Social Studies; Student Educational Objectives; *Teacher Attitudes; *Values Education
IDENTIFIERS *Louisiana; *Social Studies Teachers

ABSTRACT

This document contains a study that was designed to examine the attitudes of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers in the public schools of an eight-parish area of southeast Louisiana regarding the teaching of certain selected values. A survey composed of 17 selected statements was mailed to the teachers. The 17 statements included: "The 'right' set of values is a matter of perspective and no one set of values should be taught," and "The development of sensitivity to the need to eliminate prejudice and stereotyping from our society should be an integral part of any social studies class." Based on the findings of the study, a number of recommendations are made, including the recommendations that: school systems should provide more in-service training in values education for their teachers, and researchers should continue to study avenues for teaching elementary social studies teachers how to incorporate values education into their classes. The 17 statements included in the survey are appended, as is a 9-item list of references. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED345978

ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS TOWARD THE TEACHING OF VALUES

BY

JOANN CANGEMI

and

LINDA AUCOIN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

JOANN CANGEMI

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 021 817

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS TOWARD THE TEACHING OF VALUES

INTRODUCTION:

The elementary social studies classroom has the potential for being a powerful forum for the teaching of values (Ellis, 1991). Students can learn lasting ideas about dignity, self-esteem, compassion, loyalty and integrity. These and other values are representative of a free society; educators cannot not acknowledge their existence or importance. To do so is to risk the degradation of our society.

Whether or not values should be taught has long been a matter of debate. Teaching values presents several problems: 1) Whose values will be taught? 2) How will they be taught, by indoctrination, by example? and 3) Why bother teaching values when outside forces, such as the home and peer groups might contradict one's efforts? (Ellis, 1991).

Inspite of the aforementioned "obstacles", there is much that social studies teachers can do to present positive values to students. But they must recognize that no matter how much they accomplish, they never

know to what extent their students will embrace the values presented to them. The influences surrounding the students are many; they're varied and often they're negative. Because of this fact, teachers have a responsibility to do what they can to counter the less than positive influences in the lives of the children they teach.

Having taught and observed social studies classes for twenty plus years, the writers have become convinced of the need for the teaching of values. Thus the thrust for this attitudinal survey. Via this study the writers hope to gather data that would enhance the worth of teaching values in the elementary social studies classroom.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers in the public schools of an eight parish area of Southeast Louisiana regarding the teaching of certain selected values. In addition, the study attempted to determine which of the values were considered to be of most importance and which, if any

programs designed for the teaching of values were used by the respondents.

PROCEDURE:

To determine the attitudes of teachers toward the teaching of values, an attitudinal survey composed of seventeen selected statements was mailed in the Spring, 1991, to the fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers in the public schools of Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Mary, and Terrebonne parishes of Southeast Louisiana. The questionnaire used in the survey was developed by the authors; many of the items were modifications of statements used previously on a number of similar surveys. The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers in the public schools of the eight parishes were included in the study. Six hundred and nine (609) surveys were mailed; four hundred and twenty-nine (429) were returned. The percentage of returned surveys was 70.4%.

The teachers responding included 307 or 71.6% holding the bachelors degree and 122 or 28.4% having

a master's degree or additional education. Of the total respondents, 389 or 90.7% were female. The largest number of respondents were female in the 31-40 year old age group.

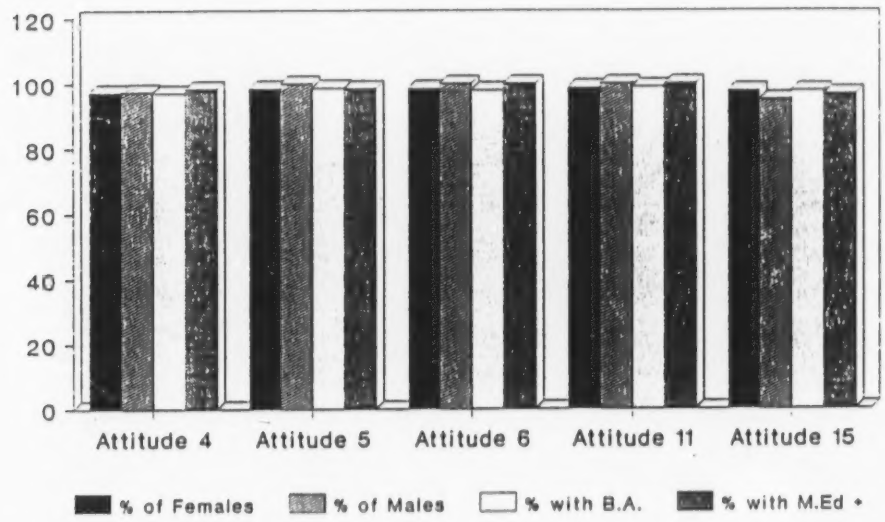
THE RESULTS:

The attitudinal survey submitted to the teachers contained a total of seventeen statements all representing values positions appropriate for use in elementary social studies classrooms. The teachers were asked to circle the response on the scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) which most closely approximated their attitude toward each statement. (A copy of the statements can be found at the end of this paper).

Of the seventeen statements, five (numbers 4,5,6, 11, and 15) dealing with respect for the property and rights of others, the importance of being responsible and cooperative, the need to eliminate prejudice, the importance of critical thinking as an aid to democratic decision making and the need for sharing insights with persons of other cultures, received the largest number of positive ratings by the teachers.

Table 1 shows the percentage of positive responses for those attitudes, 4,5,6,11, and 15, receiving the largest number of positive ratings as perceived by male teachers, female teachers, and teachers with various levels of educational attainment. The manner in which the males and females perceived these five attitudes was strikingly similar. There was also little difference in the way teachers of various levels of educational attainmnet viewed the five statements.

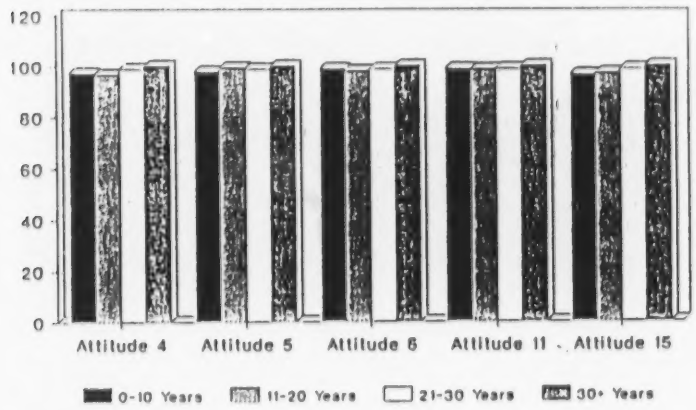
Table 1
PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES
FOR ATTITUDES 4,5,6,11 & 15



CANGEMI and AUCOIN

Table 2 presents the percentage of positive responses for attitudes 4,5,6,11, and 15 as stated by teachers of different years of teaching experience. In each category the percentage was high. As shown in Table 2, there was little difference in the views of teachers of various years of experience.

Table 2
PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES
BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

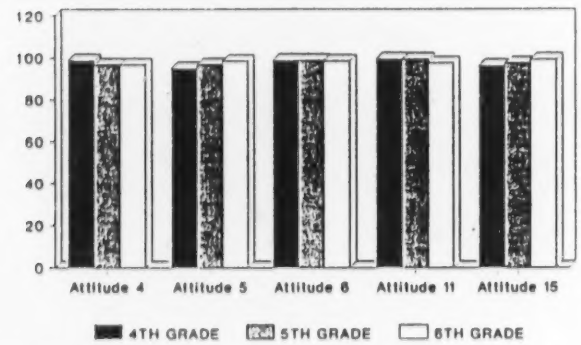


CANGEMI and AUCOIN

Table 3 shows the percentage of positive responses for attitudes 4,5,6,11, and 15, as given by teachers of grades 4,5, and 6. The data provided reveal that the fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers held similar views. It is interesting to note that the fourth grade teachers viewed attitude 4 more positively

than did the teachers of the two upper grades. Of similar interest is the fact that the fourth and fifth grade teachers were more positive than the sixth grade teachers relative to attitude 11.

Table 3
PERCENTAGE OF POSITIVE RESPONSES
BY GRADE LEVELS



CANGEMI and AUCOIN

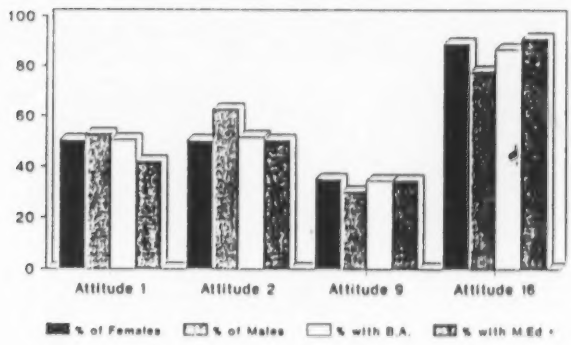
Only one statement, number 16, had a significant percentage of negative responses. It was concerned with the avoidance of controversial issues such as Aids, death, global destruction, etc. Three other statements (1,2, and 9), received from 34 to 51% negative responses. They were concerned with the ideas that no set of values should be taught, that students must learn to develop their own ideas of right and wrong, that children should be exposed to alternative value systems and that

the teacher should operate as a facilitator rather than a value setter.

Table 4 shows the percentage of negative responses for those attitudes, 1,2,9, and 16, receiving the largest number of negative ratings as perceived by male teachers, female teachers, and teachers with various levels of educational attainment. Attitude 16, as noted earlier in the text, had a significant percentage of negative responses, however, in reading that statement one will note that it reads, "Controversial issues should be avoided as topics of discussion." Thus the ratings could be perceived as not truly negative. The male teachers seemed to feel more strongly about attitude 2 than did the female teachers. The teachers holding the master's degree or above felt more strongly about attitude 16 than did those with just the bachelor's degree.

Table 5 presents the percentage of negative responses for attitudes 1,2,9, and 16 as stated by teachers of different years of teaching experience. Again attitude 16 dominates the chart. It is interesting to note that 100% of the teachers with 30 or more years of experience viewed attitude 16

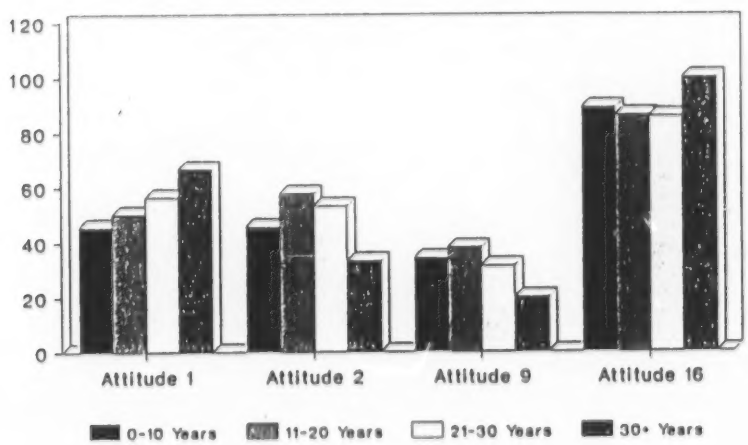
Table 4
PERCENTAGE OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES
FOR ATTITUDES 1,2,9 & 16



CANGEMI and AUCOIN

negatively. Teachers with fewer years of experience had greater percentages of negative feelings about attitude 9 than did teachers with the longest years of service.

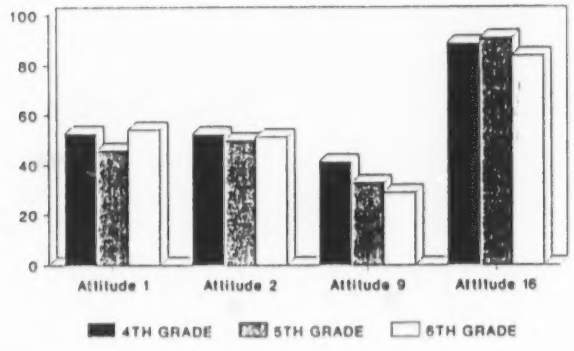
Table 5
PERCENTAGE OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES
BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



CANGEMI and AUCOIN

Table 6 shows the percentage of negative responses for attitudes 1,2,9, and 16 as given by teachers of grades 4,5, and 6. One item of note is the fact that a larger percentage of fourth grade teachers than sixth grade teachers viewed attitude 9 negatively. Attitude 16 again received the greatest percentage of negative responses.

Table 6
PERCENTAGE OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES
BY GRADE LEVELS

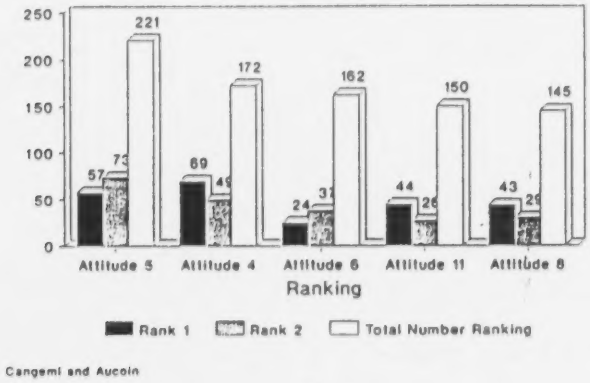


CANGEMI and AUCOIN

In the second part of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to rank the five statements they considered to be of most importance. The items most often selected are shown in Table 7. Attitudes 4, 5,6, and 11 were also among those receiving the largest number of positive ratings. 221 or 51% of the teachers selected attitude 5 as one of the five

statements considered to be of most importance; it was the item receiving the largest number of votes. However, attitude 4 was ranked first more often than any of the other "top five".

Table 7
ATTITUDES MOST OFTEN SELECTED
THE TOP FIVE

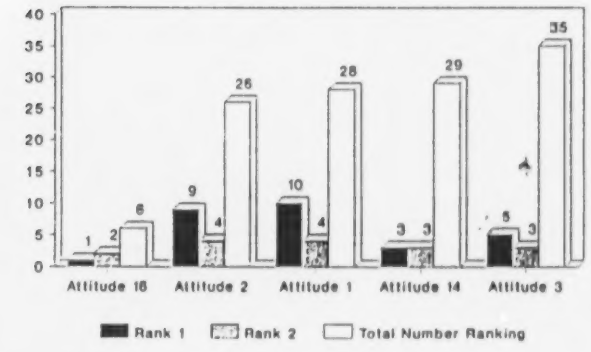


Cangemi and Aucoin

Table 8 depicts the attitudes least often selected as being considered important. The attitudes were 1,2,3,14, and 16. Attitude 16 was ranked least important. Although attitude 1 is found among the five selected as least important, it is interesting to note that 10 teachers ranked it first or as being most important.

The final part of the questionnaire asked the teachers to indicate whether or not they were familiar with a list of five values programs

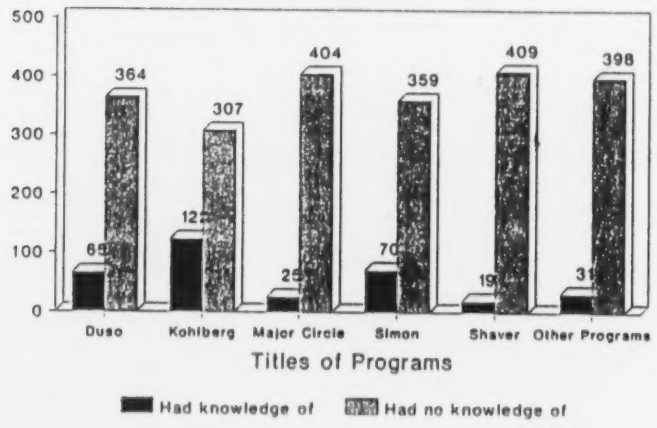
Table 8
ATTITUDES LEAST OFTEN SELECTED
THE BOTTOM FIVE



Cangemi and Aucoin

the researchers viewed to be of consequence. The programs were DUSO, Developing Understanding in Self and Others, Major Circle, a program by Palomares and Ball, The Values Inculcation Approach by James Shaver, Values Clarification by Sidney Simon et al. and Kohlberg's work in moral development. Table 9 provides an insight into the degree of familiarity that the respondents had with each of the programs. The table reveals a significant lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers relative to these popular programs. Kohlberg's work seemed to be most familiar, but it was only recognized by 28% of the teachers.

Table 9
KNOWLEDGE OF VALUES PROGRAMS



CANGEMI and AUCOIN

CONCLUSIONS:

Overall it appeared that the teachers reacted favorably to most of the seventeen statements included on the questionnaire. The fact that statement 16 (Controversial issues such as Aids, death, global destruction, should be avoided as topics of discussion) received the highest number of negative responses, is not a negative, but actually a positive reaction on the part of the teachers. What they were indicating was that the topics should be included in the discussion of fourth, fifth and sixth grade social studies students. Apparently the importance

of being responsible and cooperative, the need to respect the rights and property of other people, the need to eliminate prejudice, the need for positive role models and the high priority placed on critical thinking are what the teachers perceived to be the catalysts of successful values programs. Having students (item 2) develop their own ideas of right and wrong; establishing no one set of acceptable values (item 1); having children exposed to alternative value systems (item 3); requiring the teacher to operate as a facilitator rather than a value setter (item 9) and number 16 (avoiding controversial issues), were the items that teachers seemed to view with skepticism.

The teachers did not seem to have a very sound knowledge of values programs available to them. Only Koglberg's work received any appreciable amount of recognition, 28.4%.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. School systems should provide more in-service in value education for their teachers.
2. Teachers of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social

studies should improve their knowledge of available values programs.

3. Researchers should continue to study avenues for teaching elementary social studies teachers how to incorporate values education in their classes.
4. Researchers should investigate the educational training of teachers and the effect, if any, on values education.
5. Additional research on the seventeen values statements and the amount of attention given to each in elementary social studies should be conducted.

THE AUTHORS

JoAnn Cangemi is a Distinguished Service Professor of Education at Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Linda Aucoin is an Assistant Professor of Education at Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, Louisiana.

The statements included on the questionnaire:

1. The "right" set of values is a matter of perspective and no one set of values should be taught.

2. Students must learn to develop their own ideas of right and wrong.

3. Children should be exposed to alternative value systems.

4. The social studies classroom should provide for the recognition of the importance of responsibility, cooperation, open-mindedness, and concern for others.

5. Respect for the rights and property of others should be emphasized as social skills to be incorporated into one's value system.

6. The development of sensitivity to the need to eliminate prejudice and stereotyping from our society should be an integral part of any social studies class.

7. Social Studies classes should provide for competence in valuing processes including (1) clarifying personal and social values, (2) analyzing issues in terms of values, (3) moral reasoning, and (4) handling value conflicts.

8. Elementary students need positive role models and teachers should not be afraid to let their values show.

9. The teacher should operate as a facilitator rather than a truth giver or value setter.

10. Children should be allowed to work in teams, groups, committees in order to learn to integrate their system of values with that of others.

11. High priority should be placed on critical thinking in the development of decision making, a primary function of effective democratic citizens.

12. Values such as patriotism and loyalty are test taught by exposing children to the lives and contributions of national heroes and heroines.

13. Studying other cultures helps children to learn that one culture's values are not necessarily better than another's.

14. The study of history and literature contribute to the acquisition of time-honored human values and should thus serve as a major catalyst for the teaching of values.

15. Persons of other racial, ethnic or national origins should be invited to share their insights with students and thus help them to eliminate prejudice and stereotyping.

16. Controversial issues (Aids, death, global destruction, etc.) should be avoided as topics of discussion in grades 4,5, and 6.

17. Learning how our democratic system works prepares students to function as effective democratic citizens and thus should be included in the curriculum.

REFERENCES

Ellis, Arthur K. (1991). Teaching and learning elementary social studies. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Harshman, Ronald. (1983). A rationale for value education. Theory and Research in Social Education. 11. 45-66.

Jarolimek, John. (1986). Social studies in elementary education. New York: Macmillan.

Lockwood, Alan L. (1970). The effect of values clarification and moral development curricula on school-age subjects: A critical review of recent research. Review of Educational Research. 48-325-364.

Maxim, George. (1991). Social studies and the elementary school child.New York: Macmillan.

Metcalf, Lawrence. (Ed.). (1971). Values education: The 41st yearbook of NCSS. Washington, D.C.: NCSS.

Michaelis, John U. (1988). Social studies for children. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Palomares,Uvaldo & Ball, Gerry. (1969). Grounds for growth: The human development program's comprehensive theory. La Mesa: Human Development Training Institute.

Shaver, James. (1985). Commitment to values and the study of social problems in citizenship education. Social Education. 49:195.